

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Recovery of a Banded Crested Tern after 10 Years.**—On December 27, 1965, whilst investigating a nesting colony of Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) on Seagull Island in Lake Herschell at Rottnest Island, I found a dead tern some 2-3 yards from the outskirts of the colony. The bird was in quite good condition and had probably died only within the previous 24-48 hours. It carried a C.S.I.R.O. band on its leg which indicated that it had been ringed as a chick on Dyers Island, Rottnest, on October 26, 1955 by Dr. George Dunnet. Thus the age of this particular bird was established at being just over 10 years. The band was in excellent condition.

—(The Rev.) A. de Q. ROBIN, St. George's College, Crawley.

**Nesting of the Australian Pratincole in the North-West.**—The Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabellae*) was only added to the avifauna treated in the *Birds of Western Australia* (Serventy and Whittell) in their third edition (1962) and no record of local nesting was known. On August 30, 1965, whilst travelling through Yanrey Station 70 miles south of Onslow, I saw an unfamiliar bird standing on a bare clay flat. On further inspection three birds were located and they proved to be this species. Identification was unquestionable as my wife and I had ample time to study the birds with binoculars and we had Serventy and Whittell's third edition for consultation.

After watching the birds for some time we saw one "sit down" and on inspection two eggs were found on the bare red clay without even the pretence of a nest or sign of a scratch on the smooth surface of the clay. The eggs did not camouflage with the red clay but rather contrasted with it. They were blunt oval in shape, the ground colour being a light sandy-brown with irregularly shaped spots and blotches of brownish-black, with an under layer of similarly shaped markings of pale grey. The markings were evenly distributed over the whole surface of the shell almost covering the ground colour. Size, (a) 31.5 x 23.5 mm. (b) 30 x 23.5 mm.

—G. A. LODGE, Boyup Brook.

**Forest Bird Life at Bilbarin.**—In 1946, I made a survey of the bird population in an area of open forest at Bilbarin (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 1: 34). In the course of 40 traverses 60 species were recorded.

In April 1965 I revisited the area and found the forest apparently unchanged, though the surrounding areas have been developed considerably and now afford much less cover for bird life. I spent from the mid-afternoon of April 3 until the mid-morning of the following day in the forest, and during that time recorded 29 of the species originally listed and three additional species, viz., Dusky Miner, Rufous Tree-creeper and Owllet Nightjar. This last species I recorded near the forest in 1946 so it was almost certainly present then.

Of the 30 most frequent species in 1946, 20 were relocated, the absentees being the migrant Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo, Pallid Cuckoo,

Rainbow-bird, Grey Fantail and White-winged Triller, the nomadic Brown Honeyeater, and the Southern Scrub-robin, Brown Thornbill, Nankeen Kestrel and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

Of the 30 species in the second half of the 1946 list those not re-located were migrants, nomads, stragglers to the forest or relative rarities and none of these was of more than 10% frequency in 1946.

I should say that my observations indicate very little change in the avian population in the study area, though at the time of my visit the Red-capped Robin population appeared to be substantially reduced.

Two species rare in 1946 were recorded—the Western Yellow Robin and the Yellow-plumed Honeyeater.

Many wheatbelt townsites where towns have failed to develop, or have declined, have areas of native vegetation comparable with that at Bilbarin. These are apparently large enough to sustain a varied, indeed, a rich, population of bird species and could be significant as refuges for species hard pressed by rapid development in these areas.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Harvey.

**Range Extensions in Some Western Australian Birds.**—As a result of field collections on behalf of the Chicago Natural History Museum I have been able to discover some additions to the known ranges of local birds. Among these are the following:

Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis*). In their earlier editions of the *Birds of Western Australia* Serventy and Whittell gave the southern range of this North-West species as the Wooramel River and the upper Murchison. In the third edition (1962) they gave more precise southern limits in Mileura Station and Karalundi Mission (36 miles north of Meekatharra). On October 26, 1965, I was surprised to see a single bird of the species in a mulga thicket 8 miles south of Wurarga and 6 miles north of Gullewa. It was collected and found to be an adult male with fully pneumatized skull and medium-sized gonads (7.6 x 5.4 mm.). There were no other individuals in the vicinity. This locality is about 160 miles south-west of Mileura and thus represents a very substantial extension of the recorded range of the species. The general region has been tolerably well-worked by ornithologists, particularly earlier this century. F. Lawson Whitlock in his paper on the birds of the East Murchison (*Emu*, 9, 1910: 197) commented thus on its status: "I only met with this species around Milly Pool [20 miles north-west of Wiluna] and further to the north-west, along the Peak Hill stock route. I question if it occurs much further south."

Blue-breasted Wren (*Malurus pulcherrimus*): The boundary between the two chestnut-shouldered wrens, *pulcherrimus* and *lamberti*, can only be satisfactorily determined by collecting. D. L. Serventy (*Emu*, 51, 1951: 115) gives a series of localities. I am now able to add Bunjil (between Percnfori and Latham) as a locality for *M. pulcherrimus*, a pair, including a fine male in full plumage.